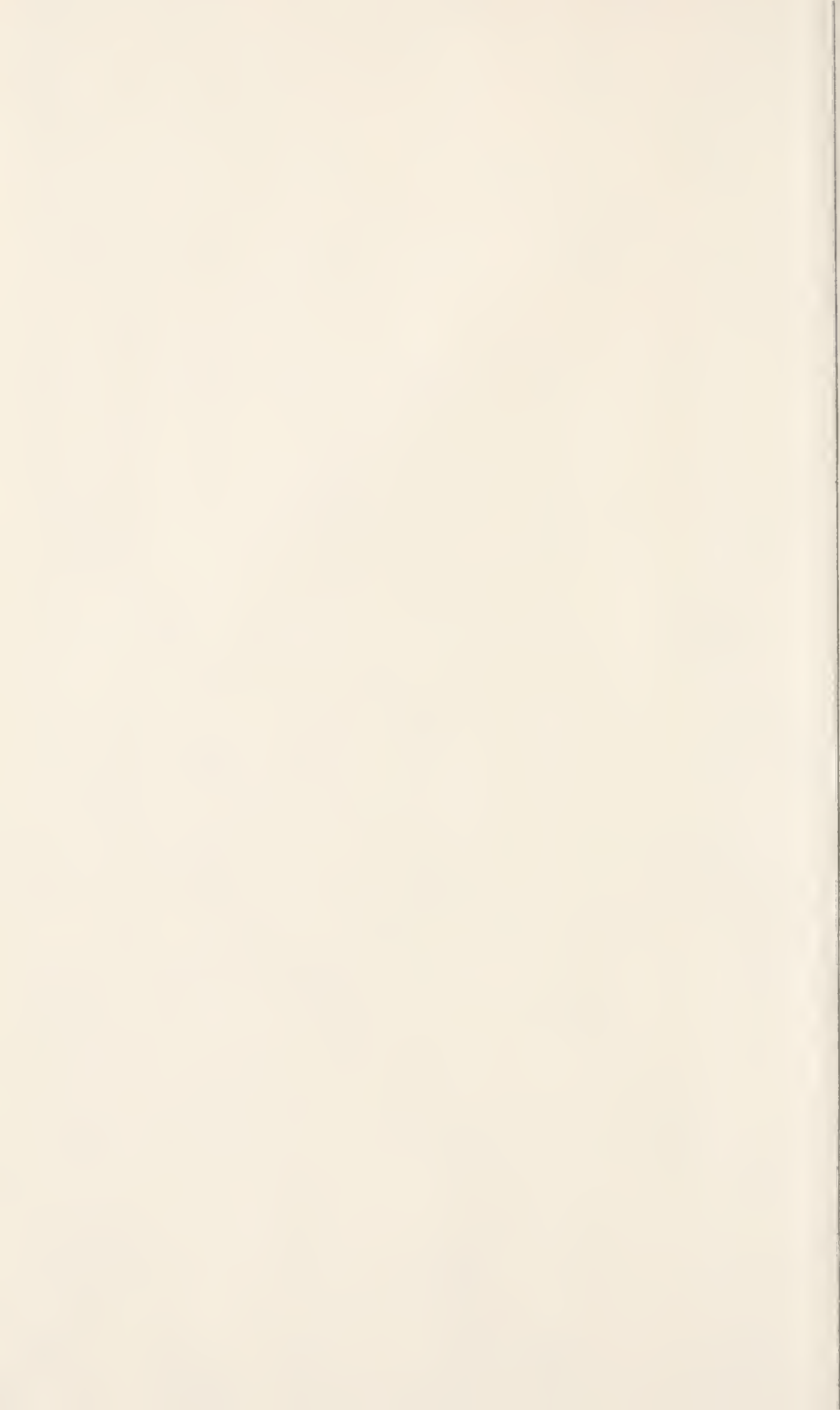


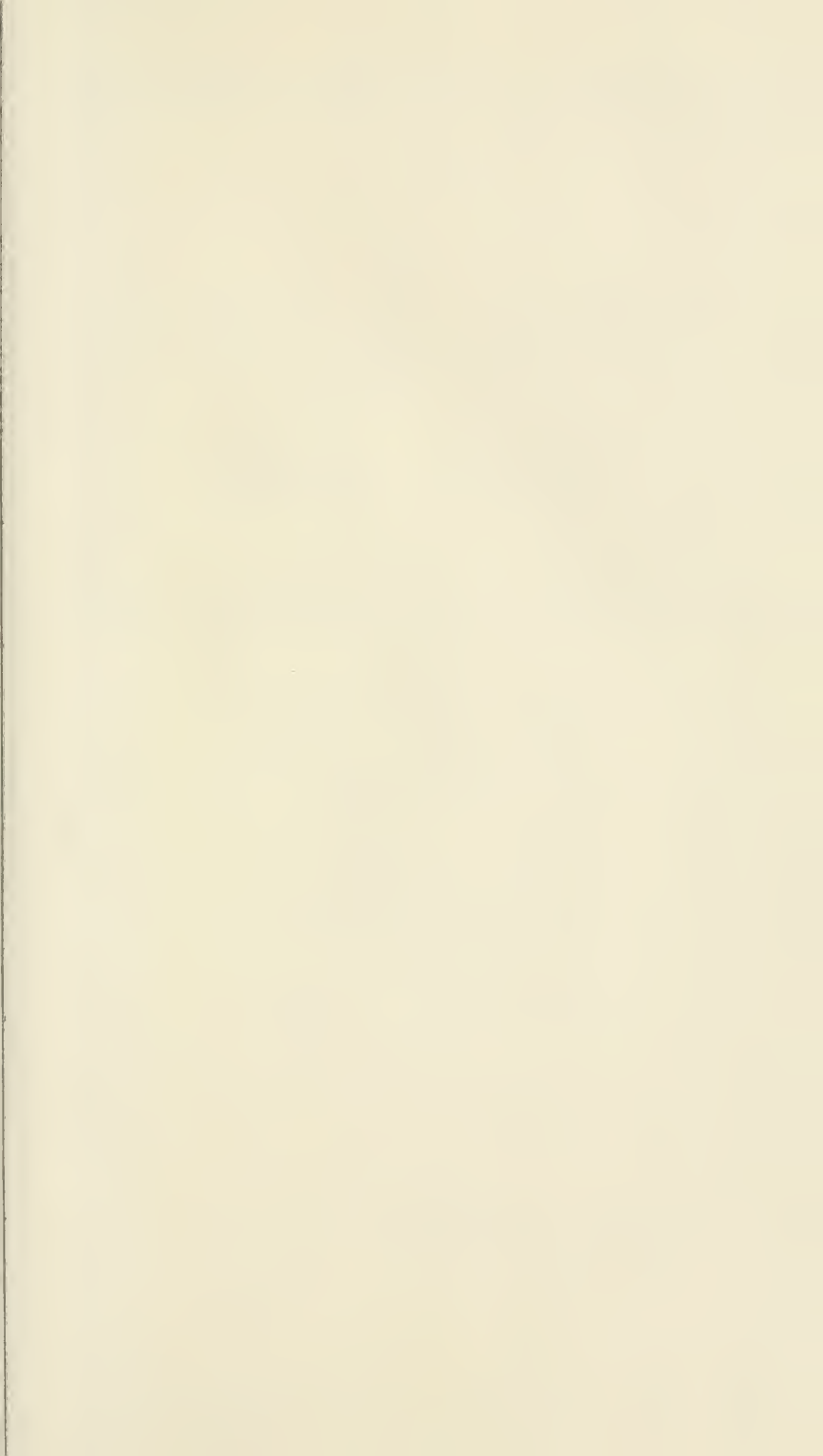
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Farmington in the War of the Revolution

AN

HISTORICAL ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE

ANNUAL MEETING

OF

THE VILLAGE LIBRARY COMPANY

OF

FARMINGTON, CONN.

MAY 3, 1893

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By JULIUS GAY
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HARTFORD, CONN.

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ADDRESS.

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Village Library Company of Farmington:

I propose this evening to answer, in a somewhat informal way, certain questions often asked about Farmington in the days of the Revolution. I shall have little to say of battles and campaigns, and great generals. A glimpse, and only a glimpse, we may have of Washington as he rides into the forest toward Litchfield, soon to learn of the treachery of Arnold. All these weightier matters every schoolboy knows, or ought to know. My subject lies nearer home, of little interest but to those whose grandsires here lived, and from this valley went out to preserve its liberties.

The visitor to the old cemetery, after passing through the gateway with its grim inscription, "*Memento Mori*," and climbing the steep pathway beyond, soon finds on his left a stone with this inscription: "In Memory of | Mr. Matthias Leaming | Who has got | Beyond the reach of Parcecushion. | The life of man is Vanity." There is no date of death or record of age. It is not so much the memorial of an individual as of a lost cause. Its position, facing in opposition to all the other stones, is itself a protest. Matthias Leaming was a Tory, or, as he preferred to be called, a Loyalist. At the close of the war the Tories mostly fled to England, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Canada, and in 1790 were allowed fifteen and one-half millions of dollars by the Crown, besides annuities, offices, and other gifts, in recompense for their

services and sufferings. So few remained here that we hardly realize that once, taking New England as a whole, they were as numerous and wealthy as the patriot party. We have no time to consider at length the causes of the war, but certain things we must bear in mind if we would at all understand the spirit of the times. The orators had much to say of taxation without representation, and stout Dr. Johnson replied in vigorous English that taxation was no tyranny. Other matters, however, less abstract, had gradually prepared the patriots to resist to the death this last imposition. The colonists were denied the right to manufacture for themselves almost all articles of necessity, but must import them from some Englishman whose sovereign had given him the monopoly. Their commerce was restricted to British ports. Even the agricultural products of the neighboring West Indies must first be shipped to England before they could be landed in Boston. They were denied a market either for sale or purchase outside of the dominion of Great Britain. The British merchant could say, "You shall trade at my shop or starve, and you shall make nothing for yourselves." Their solemn charters were annulled, authority to elect their principal officers was denied them, and the right to assemble in town meeting abolished. Repeatedly his Majesty asked, in a long list of questions submitted to the General Assembly of Connecticut, where his dutiful subjects bought and sold, and what they presumed to manufacture, and repeatedly he was shrewdly answered. So long as diplomacy and downright, wholesale smuggling availed, the crisis was averted, but when the wants of the British treasury, and especially of the East India Company, demanded a rigorous enforcement of the laws, the situation became intolerable. To all this was added the threat of vigorous government by lords spiritual as well

as lords temporal, from which they had once for all escaped.

The lapse of a hundred years has made the position of the loyalists, who were ready to submit to all demands of their divinely anointed king as a matter of course, a mystery to us whose habitual treatment of our highest magistrate has not trained us in habits of reverence. The graceful sentiments of Sir Walter Scott's heroine have to us an unreal sound :

“ Lands and manors pass away,
 We but share our monarch's lot.
 If no more our annals show
 Battles won and banners taken,
 Still in death, defeat, and wo,
 Ours be loyalty unshaken ! ”

More easily can we understand the sturdy independence of the patriots. They came to these shores, not for religious freedom, which was a principle unknown, but to establish a church of their own and a government of their own, such as their consciences demanded, narrow, as our vision, broadened by two centuries, looks upon them, but established by themselves and for themselves only, where there was no one to be interfered with, and leaving in the more genial regions of the South plenty of room for the colonies of other religious proclivities. How long this exclusiveness could be maintained, time has shown. These men, to whom Church and State were one, whose religion was a covenant with God, between whom and themselves they allowed no human mediator, were the men whom George III thought to crush.

On the 31st of March, 1774, the Boston Port bill was signed, and on the 1st of June it went into effect. Its reception in this town will appear in the following letter :

“ FARMINGTON, CONNECTICUT, May 19, 1774.

“ Early in the morning was found the following handbill, posted up in various parts of the town, viz. :

“‘To pass through the fire at six o'clock this evening, in honor to the immortal Goddess of Liberty, the late infamous act of the British Parliament for farther distressing the American colonies. The place of execution will be the public parade, where all Sons of Liberty are desired to attend.’

“Accordingly, a very numerous and respectable body were assembled, of near one thousand people, when a huge pole, just forty-five feet high, was erected, and consecrated to the shrine of Liberty; after which the act of Parliament for blocking up the Boston harbor was read aloud, sentenced to the flames, and executed by the hands of the common hangman. Then the following resolves were passed, *nem con.*”

The resolves were spirited, but too long for our present purpose.

The Rev. Samuel Peters, of Hebron, notorious as the author of “A General History of Connecticut . . . by a Gentleman of the Province,” and inventor of the so-called “Blue Laws of Connecticut,” comments on these proceedings as follows:

“Farmington burnt the act of Parliament in great contempt by their common hangman, when a thousand of her best inhabitants were convened for that glorious purpose of committing treason against the king; for which vile conduct they have not been stiled a pest to Connecticut, and enemies to common sense, either by his Honor or any king's attorney, or in any town meeting. We sincerely wish and hope a day will be set apart by his Honor very soon for fasting and prayer throughout this colony, that the sins of those haughty people may not be laid to our charge.”

We shall hear enough of fast days, but they were not proclaimed to bewail the sins of Farmington.

The situation of the once flourishing port of Boston was now most critical, and donations for the relief of its suffering inhabitants flowed in from the surrounding towns. The action of this town on the 15th of June is chronicled at length in the admirable discourse of President Porter. The following is a letter written by Samuel Adams in response to this action, addressed “To Fisher

Gay, Esq., and the rest of the Committee in Farmington, Connecticut.

“BOSTON, July 29, 1774.

“*Sir*,—I am desired by the Committee of the Town of Boston, appointed to receive the donations made by our sympathizing brethren, for the employment or relief of such inhabitants of this town as are more immediate sufferers by the cruel act of Parliament for shutting up this harbor, to acquaint you that our friend, Mr. Barrett, has communicated to them your letter of the 25th instant, advising that you have shipped, per Captain Israel Williams, between three and four hundred bushels of rye and Indian corn for the above-mentioned purpose, and that you have the subscriptions still open, and expect after harvest to ship a much larger quantity. Mr. Barrett tells us that upon the arrival of Captain Williams he will endorse this bill of lading or receipt to us.

“The Committee have a very grateful sense of the generosity of their friends in Farmington, who may depend upon their donations being applied agreeable to their benevolent intention, as it is a great satisfaction to the Committee to find the Continent so united in opinion. The town of Boston is now suffering for the common liberties of America, and while they are aided and supported by their friends, I am persuaded they will struggle through the conflict, firm and steady.

“I am, with very great regard, gentlemen,

“Your friend and countryman,

“SAMUEL ADAMS.”

Five weeks later, on the 3d of September, the following agreement was drawn up in the handwriting of Major William Judd, and bears the signatures of seventy of the principal inhabitants of this village :

“We, whose names are hereunto subscribers, promise and engage to be in readiness and duly equip with arms and ammunition to proceed to Boston for the relief of our distressed and besieged brethren there, and to be under the direction of such officers as shall be by us appointed, as witness our hands this 3d day of September, A. D. 1774.”

A roll of honor on which we may well be pleased to see the names of our ancestors recorded.

Town meetings followed in quick succession. On the 20th of September the Rev. Levi Hart of Preston was invited to preach to the assembled freemen of Farmington on Liberty. He preached them a sermon on "Liberty Described and Recommended," but his text must have sounded strangely in their ears as he read, "While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption." There was not a word about British tyranny, but a fervid discourse to our merchant princes on the horrors of the slave trade.

Strange doctrine this. Did not the good men of that day rejoice in thus delivering benighted souls from the heathen darkness of Africa? West India shippers, not only of this, but of all trading communities, universally engaged in the traffic. Times have changed. Let us judge men by the light of their own day. We, no doubt, will need like favor badly enough an hundred years hence.

The meeting, at the close of the discourse, proceeded to vote thirty hundred-weight of lead, ten thousand French flints, and thirty six barrels of powder. A little later they voted "that the several constables should have a large staff provided for each of them with the King's arms upon them." The authority of the King was as yet unquestioned.

On the 12th of December the town approved of the Association of the Continental Congress and appointed a Committee of Inspection to carry out its provisions. This committee of fifty-two men at once met at the tavern of Amos Cowles, and while they are busy with the public good, and, very likely, with the good of the house, let us take a little rest from the contemplation of these warlike proceedings and look about us. The inn of Amos Cowles stood just south of the church, on or about the site of the house of the late Chauncey D. Cowles, Esq. It has long

since disappeared, as have all but about a half-dozen of the houses of that day, and they, for the most part, have been reconstructed past recognition. The village street, certainly not since broadened with age, ran as now, and along it passed the pedestrian, the horseback rider, and the unwieldy cart of the farmer. Pleasure carriages were unknown. When the minister of that day brought home his bride in the first chaise his parishoners had ever seen they lined the street to welcome him, and the first man who caught sight of the coming chaise shouted, "The cart is coming." Mail coaches were unknown. In 1778 Joseph Root advertised in *The Connecticut Courant* as follows :

"This is to notify those that have friends in General Parsons' brigade that I have undertook to ride post for the town of Farmington, the letters to be left at my house and at Landlord Adams', Southington; at Landlord Smith's, New Britain; at Landlord Hayes', Salmon Brook; at Esq. Owen's, Simsbury; at Joseph Kellogg's, New Hartford, and at Robert Mecune's, at Winchester. Those who have letters to send are desired to leave them at either of the above places by the first day of next month, at which time I shall set out.

JOSEPH ROOT.

"N. B. Letters may also be left at Lieut. Heth's, West Hartford, and at Landlord Butler's in Hartford.

"FARMINGTON, June 12, 1778."

The travel between the two capitals of the colony then, as now, passed on the other side of the mountain through Wethersfield and Wallingford, but the exigencies of war required new lines of communication, and this quiet street was soon to be familiar with the measured tread of armies. Thomas Lewis, writing to Lieut. Amos Wadsworth at Roxbury Camp, says :

"The same night" (that is, July 19, 1775,) "lodged in this town a captain with a company of riflemen, who appeared to be, many of them, very likely young gentlemen. The officers informed me a great number of their soldiers were men possessed

with fortunes worth three or four thousand apiece. These are from Philadelphia and on their march to join the army. The Captain told me he expected one thousand more of the same troops would pass the town next week for the like purpose."

After the evacuation of Boston the line of communication from Newport and Hartford to the Highlands above New York passed through this village.

Here in 1781 marched the army of Rochambeau. The diary of one of his aids, accompanied with a map of the route, records, under date of June 24th :

"In the afternoon I went to see a charming spot called Wethersfield, four miles from East Hartford. It would be impossible to find prettier houses and a more beautiful view. I went up into the steeple of the church and saw the richest country I had yet seen in America. From this spot you can see for fifty miles around.

"June 25. In the morning the army resumed its march to reach Farmington. The country is more open than that we had passed over since our departure, and the road fine enough. The village is considerable, and the position of the camp, which is a mile and a half from it, was one of the most fortunate we had as yet occupied."

On the return of the army in 1782 Rochambeau made a halt in Farmington on the 29th of October, and the next day in Hartford.

Of the journeys of Washington through this town he leaves us but brief mention. In May, 1781, he writes :

"I begin at this epoch a concise journal of military transactions, etc. I lament not having attempted it from the commencement of the war."

In this journal he writes :

"May 19th. Breakfasted at Litchfield, dined at Farmington, and lodged at Wethersfield."

Also :

"May 24th. Set out on my return to New Windsor, dined at Farmington, and lodged at Litchfield."

This is all we gather from his own writing, but we know that on the 18th of September, 1780, he bade adieu to General Arnold at Peekskill and was in Hartford on the 21st. The commonly traveled road between the places lay through Farmington. After his conference with Rochambeau, he leaves Hartford on the 23d and arrives at Litchfield on the same day. Two days later he heard of the flight of Arnold. On the 2d of March, 1781, he left New Windsor, and arrived at Hartford on the 4th, and, returning on Sunday the 18th, was back at his headquarters at New Windsor on the 20th. He seems, therefore, to have passed through Farmington six times: on the 20th and 23d of September, 1780, the 4th and 18th of March, 1781, and the 19th and 24th of May, 1781.

What house had the honor of entertaining his Excellency is uncertain. An idle tradition one hears over and over again tells us that once, being overtaken by a sudden storm, Washington took refuge in the newly erected meeting-house, but if there is any one with any military experience before me, I will leave him to determine into which the General would most likely turn his steps, the hospitable inn of Amos Cowles, or the house of God with closed doors, standing there side by side. The means of entertainment at that day were ample. As he rode down the mountain slope from the east and first came in sight of the meeting-house spire, the tavern of Samuel North, Jr., greeted him on the left. A little farther on, where the Elm Tree Inn now stands, Mr. Phineas Lewis would have been happy to entertain the General. He could also have been cordially welcomed by Mr. Seth Lee, where are now the brick school buildings of Miss Porter. If he succeeded in passing all these attractions, the newly erected inn of Mr. Asahel Wadsworth, grandfather of the late Winthrop M. Wadsworth, Esq., hung out its sign, and just as he turned off from the main street into the wilder-

ness toward Litchfield there was still the well-known inn of Captain Solomon Cowles to prepare him for the rough journey before him. This last tavern was famous in its day. The weary teamster on his journey with supplies for the army hailed it with delight. One Joseph Joslin, Jr., a revolutionary teamster from Killingly, left a racy diary which ought to please the modern advocates of phonetic spelling. He says:

"April 21, 1777. We set out again and went through Harwinton into Farmington, and it was very bad carting indeed, I declare, and we stayed at a very good tavern, old Captain Coles', and we fare well, and did lie in a bed, I think."

The hay mow by the side of his cattle was usually considered good enough for a revolutionary teamster. Three days later he says:

"I went to Farmington to old Captain Coles' again."

But alas! the hopes of man are deceitful. It was a Fast day, and all he could get was a little cold, raw pork. But it is time for us to return to our Committee of Inspection, whom we left at the house of Amos Cowles. William Judd was made chairman and John Treadwell clerk, and their business was to carry out the requirements of the fourteen articles of the Association of the Continental Congress. This agreement, signed by the representatives of the twelve colonies at Philadelphia on the 20th of October, 1774, was not so much sustained by law as by the merciless power of public opinion. The transgressor was looked upon as Achan with his wedge of gold in the Israelitish camp before Jericho. A single instance will illustrate the spirit of the times and help you to understand what is to follow. Samuel Smith, merchant, of New Britain, had been convicted by Isaac Lee, Jr., justice of the peace, of selling metheglin at too high a price, namely, at eight shillings the gallon, and hens' eggs at

the enormous price of one shilling the dozen. He brought his humble petition to the General Assembly, in which he says :

“ But when your memorialist reflects on the disability he is under, a sort of political death or disfranchisement which must render him incapable either to provide for or save himself from insult, or to serve the public in this time of calamity, which he always has and still wishes to do, he cannot but in the most humble manner pray this honorable Assembly to take your memorialist's case into your wise consideration and grant that he may be restored to his former freedom.”

The petition was signed by Justice Lee and twenty-six of the principal men of New Britain. The Assembly promptly granted his petition. Our committee held several meetings, and considered numerous complaints which the Sons of Liberty had to make concerning the patriotism of their neighbors and of each other. It required cool heads and ripe wisdom to satisfy this red-hot zeal and do justice to all offenders. I will note only a few representative cases. Samuel Scott was accused of laboring on a Continental Fast day. This solemn day was to be kept with all the strictness of the Jewish Sabbath, and in its entirety. “ Thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates.” It was not alleged that he had himself performed any labor on that sacred day, but there was some suspicion that one of his hired men might have done some work not strictly necessary. For this and similar cases the committee drew up a form of confession, in which the accused affirmed his fervid patriotism and regretted any breach of the fourteen articles he might possibly have been guilty of. Another case made our worthy committee more trouble. Captain Solomon Cowles and Martha, his wife, were complained of for allowing Seth Bird of Litchfield

and Daniel Sheldon of Woodbury to drink India tea at their tavern. From the time of the destruction of the tea in Boston harbor nothing so roused the wrath of the patriots as any dalliance with this forbidden luxury. Their wives, who had patriotically abstained from their darling beverage and looked with regretful eyes on their unused china, could not endure such intemperance as this. The guilty parties printed their humble apology in *The Connecticut Courant*. Seth Bird was exceedingly wroth, and published in the next paper his version of the affair, this tempest in a teapot, as it seems to us, laying all the blame on the landlady, and accusing her and the committee of making him infamous. It was the old story of the forbidden fruit and the ignoble reply, "The woman gave me and I did eat." He says:

"About the middle of the month of March last past I called for breakfast at Captain Solomon Cowles'. The landlady said she would get some, and asked what would suit, and added, says she, 'I suppose you don't drink tea.' I answered that I had not practised it, to be sure, since March came in, but as I feel this morning it would not wrong my conscience to drink a dish or two, if I could come at it, for I had a new cold by riding in the wet the night before and had slept very little, etc. The landlady replied that if I felt unwell she supposed she might get me some, and accordingly went and prepared it, and I drank thereof."

The committee do not seem to have taken any notice of Mr. Bird's disrespectful paper. Litchfield was a far country, and, like the immortal Dogberry, they no doubt thanked God they were well rid of one offender. More serious still were the complaints against the Tories. Some one petitioned that Nehemiah Royce, "a person politically excommunicated," be prevented from sending his children to the public school. The committee wisely declined any such action, and, moreover, voted that the evidence against him "is not sufficient to justify the com-

mittee in advertising said Royce in the gazette." Every week there appeared on the first page of *The Courant*, in the blackest type Mr. Watson possessed, a list of enemies of their country, and confessions from parties accused appeared from every part of the State. Matthias Leaming, they voted, should be advertised in the public gazette "for a contumacious violation of the whole Association of the Continental Congress," and then voted to defer the execution of their sentence. By the middle of the following September the committee had had enough of the business, and voted "to request a dismissal from the office, it being too burthensome to be executed by them for a longer time." A new committee was appointed, who passed a few votes, and then we hear no more of them. There were more important matters to occupy the public mind. The persecution of Matthias Leaming, however, was not yet ended. As late as 1783 his petition to the General Assembly sets forth that, being involved in debt, he had conveyed his real estate to a brother without his knowledge and without receiving one penny in consideration. Unfortunately for Matthias, his brother joined the enemy in New York, and the land, being found recorded in his name, was confiscated.

A very long and minute report by the legislative committee is on file, in which they decided adversely. Three years later another long memorial met the same fate, but in 1787 the Assembly gave him £80 in treasury notes, payable on the 1st of the next February. Before that day the treasury was virtually bankrupt. In October, 1788, Governor Treadwell drew up another memorial, and persuaded Rev. Timothy Pitkin, Col. Noadiah Hooker, and twelve others of the most prominent men of the village to petition the Assembly to assist him in his old age and distress. No action was taken. The treasury was powerless to help. No doubt the Tories were treated roughly.

Some lost their lands by confiscation. Some were hung. It is very easy to sit by the quiet firesides which the valor of patriotic fathers secured us and coolly moralize on their severity. War is not a lovely thing, least of all, civil war. The sight of neighbors with whom we were wont to hold pleasant converse arrayed against us, side by side with hired mercenaries and scalping savages, rouses passions slumbering deep down in human nature, which war always has and always will arouse, moralize as we will, so long as warm blood flows in human veins. A single letter written by Dr. Timothy Hosmer of this village to Ensign Amos Wadsworth July 30, 1775, illustrates the spirit of the times, and is, perhaps, quite enough to say about Whig and Tory hatred. He says :

“ The first act I shall give you is concerning the grand Continental Fast as conducted by that great friend to administration, the Rev. John Smalley. The Sunday before the Fast, after service, he read the proclamation, and then told his people that fasting and prayer were no doubt a Christian duty, and that they ought in times of trouble to set apart a suitable time to celebrate a fast, but they were not obliged to keep the day by that proclamation, as they (the Congress) had no power to command, but only to recommend, and desired they would speak their minds by a vote, whether they would keep the day. The vote was accordingly called for, and it appeared to be a scant vote, though they met on the Fast day and he preached to them. We look upon it as implicitly denying all authority of Congress. It hath awakened his best friends against him. Even Lieut. Porter, Mr. Bull, and John Treadwell say they cannot see any excuse for him, and I believe the committee will take up the matter and call him to answer for his conduct. There hath happened a terrible rumpus at Waterbury with the Tories there. Capt. Nicholl's son, Josiah, enlisted under Capt. Porter in Gen. Wooster's regiment, went down to New York with the regiment, tarried a short time, and deserted . . . came home and kept a little under covert, but goes down to Saybrook and there enlisted with Capt. Shipman . . . got his bounty and rushed off again. Capt. Shipman came up after him . . . and went with some people they had got

to assist them to Lemuel Nicholl's, where they supposed he was. Lemuel forbade their coming in, and presented a sword and told them it was death to the first that offered to enter, but one young man seized the sword by the blade and wrenched it out of his hands. They bound him and made a search through the house, but could find nothing of Josiah. The Tories all mustered to defend him, and finally got Lemuel from them and he and Josiah pushed off where they cannot be found. This ran through Thursday. The Whigs sent over to Southington for help, and the people almost all went from Southington on Friday. They took Capt. Nicholls, whom they found on his belly over in his lot, in a bunch of alders, carried him before Esq. Hopkins, and had him bound over to the County Court at New Haven. . . . They had near 100 Tories collected upon the occasion, and were together till ten o'clock Friday night. They dispersed and there was nothing done to humble them, but I apprehend the next opportunity I have to write I shall be able to inform you that Smalley and they, too, will be handled."

If the Rev. Dr. Smalley of New Britain, eminent divine and esteemed pastor, had not at this time determined which cause to espouse, there was no doubt in the mind of the pastor of the church in Farmington, the Rev. Timothy Pitkin. His pulpit rang with fervid discourses on liberty. He visited his parishioners in their camp, and wrote them letters of encouragement and sympathy. To Amos Wadsworth, in camp at Roxbury, he writes:

"These wait on you as a token of my friendship. Truly I feel for my native, bleeding country, and am embarked with you in one common cause. . . . What you may be called to is unknown. I wish you may fill up your new department with wisdom, courage, and decorum. My hope is yet in God, the Lord of Hosts and God of Armies."

To the first company of soldiers marching from Simsbury he preached a farewell sermon from the words, "Play the man for your country, and for the cities of your God; and the Lord do that which seemeth Him good."

At the opening of the war there stood at the south-

west corner of Main street and the Meadow lane, as it was called, a shop where Amos and Fenn Wadsworth advertised to sell drugs, groceries, etc., etc. Amos, the elder brother, was one of the first soldiers to march to Boston, and it is from his extensive correspondence, together with the orderly-book of Roger Hooker and the diary of Deacon Samuel Richards, that most of our knowledge of Farmington men in the war is derived. The first Farmington company commenced its march on the 18th of May, 1775, being the 6th company of General Joseph Spencer's regiment. The officers were Noadiah Hooker, Captain; Peter Curtiss and Joseph Byington, Lieutenants; Amos Wadsworth, Ensign, and Roger Hooker, Orderly-Sergeant. They were eight days on their march, resting one rainy day at Thompson. They were stationed at Roxbury and there remained during the siege. They were therefore at a distance from Bunker Hill and took no part in the battle of June 17th. Deacon Richards, however, gives a description of the battle as he saw it from elevated ground at Roxbury. With the exception of this one battle, the whole army was kept in inglorious inactivity for want of powder, seldom returning the fire from the batteries in Boston. Deacon Richards says:

“The almost constant fire of the enemy produced one effect probably not contemplated by them: it hardened our soldiers rapidly to stand and bear fire. When their balls had fallen and became still the men would strive to be the first to pick them up to carry to a sutler to exchange for spirits. At one time they came near paying dear for their temerity. A bomb had fallen into a barn, and in the daytime it could not be distinguished from a cannon ball in its passage. A number were rushing in to seize it when it burst and shattered the barn very much, but without injuring any one. . . . One night a ball passed through my apartment in the barracks, a few feet over me, as I lay in my berth. Such things, having become common, we thought little of them.”

The troops before Boston were mostly farmers, each at home the absolute lord of his broad acres, impatient of military discipline, and a sore trial to the patience of Washington. Over and over again Orderly-Sergeant Roger Hooker records, "It is with astonishment the General finds," etc., etc. On the 4th of August it is

"With indignation and shame the General observes that, notwithstanding the repeated orders which have been given to prevent the firing of guns in and about the camp which is daily practised, that, contrary to all orders, straggling soldiers do still pass the guards and fire at a distance where there is not the least probability of hurting the enemy, and where there is no end answered but to waste their ammunition and keep their own camp in a continual alarm, to the hurt and detriment of every good soldier who is thereby disturbed of his natural rest, and at length will never be able to distinguish between the real and false alarm."

Occasionally the men were allowed to gratify their restlessness in certain madcap adventures. On the 12th of June Amos Wadsworth writes:

"A week ago last Friday about one hundred of our men went to one of the islands to assist some of the Whigs in getting off their families and effects. They brought off about 500 sheep, some cattle and horses, and took a boat belonging to one of the transport ships with three men as they were fishing near the shore. They secured the men and drew out the boat in plain sight of a man-of-war. The ship twice manned out her boats and set off, but put back without doing anything more. Our men got a team and cart, loaded the boat into the cart, hoisted her sails, set the two commanding officers in the stern of the boat, and the three prisoners rowing, and in this manner drove on as far as Cambridge, where they confined their prisoners in gaol. . . . Eight of our company were in the expedition. She is now launched in a large pond about 100 rods from us, very convenient for us to fish and sail in."

Amos Wadsworth, Roger Hooker, and others of their company were in the somewhat famous boat expedition of July 11th. Amos writes:

"It was necessary for us to take the night for the business, as we had several ships of war to pass. We lay till after sundown, and then manned out 45 whale boats and set off for Long Island in order to take whatever we could find on the island. About 11 o'clock arrived at the island, and landed without opposition, and drove off 19 cattle, about 100 sheep, 1 horse, 4 hogs. The island lies between the lighthouse and Castle, and, we supposed, was guarded by a party of regulars. The island is about one and one-half miles long, and one large house on it, which contained considerable furniture, which we carried off the most of it. We took 19 prisoners on the island, two of whom were women, one a young lady a native of Boston, who, they said, was to have been married to the captain of the King's store ship the next week. The most of the prisoners, we suppose, were marines and sailors sent on shore to cut hay for the use of the troops in Boston. . . . We towed the cattle near two miles at the stern of the boats to another island, where we landed them, and a part of the men drove them at low water to the main land. There were 7 ships lying so near the shore that we could hear people talk on board them, though not distinctly, and see the ships plain. I can give no reason why they did not fire on us. After we had returned as far as Dorchester with the boats the prisoners said there was something of value left in the house. We got to Dorchester Wednesday morning about 6 o'clock. Ten boats were manned out with fresh hands to go and make farther search and burn the barn and hay. They landed in the daytime, and were attacked by a number of the King's troops in a boat and an armed schooner, which fired grape-shot and obliged them to retreat with the loss of one man. However, they fired the house and barn before they left the island, but had not time to get much furniture on board, nor was there much for them, as we brought off all the beds, chairs, tables, a considerable quantity of wool, cupboard furniture, etc."

Amos wrote many entertaining letters which I have no time to quote at length. He gave to his brother Fenn, who kept the shop in his absence, minute directions for preparing those tremendous medical compounds which were supposed to suit the hardy constitutions of our ancestors. His orders about clothing would horrify the trim

militia man of our time. Every man in the army dressed as seemed good unto himself. There were no uniforms. Deacon Elijah Porter, Farmington's first librarian, is said, on the authority of another deacon, to have worn his wedding suit to the war. Orderly-Sergeant Roger Hooker records on the 14th of June :

“That no man appear for any duty, except fatigue, with long trousers, or without stockings and shoes.”

After Washington took command the orderly-book announces that the officers

“Be distinguished in the following manner. The Commander-in-Chief with a light blue ribbon worn across his breast between his coat and vest. The Major and Brigadier-Generals with a pink ribbon in the same manner, and the Aids-de-Camp by a green ribbon.”

Colonel Fisher Gay writes, February 26th :

“Was Officer of the Day. . . . 27th, returned the sash . . . at 9 o'clock and made report to Gen. Ward.”

This sash or ribbon seems to have been the means of distinguishing officers from privates. On the 4th of September Lieut. Wadsworth was on the point of joining Arnold's expedition against Quebec, but was dissuaded by his friends. Almost the next we hear of him is the account of his funeral, celebrated with much military display on the 30th of October, the day after his death. The procession was headed by an advance guard of twenty men with reversed arms, followed by the Sergeants as bearers. The coffin was covered with black velvet and bore two crossed swords. Then followed the mourners, his mother and brother, the regiment under arms, and the officers of the other regiments. The musicians played the tune, “Funeral Thoughts,” and at the end of every line the drums beat one stroke. The march was a

mile and a half long, and during the last half-mile the Brookline bell tolled constantly. His monument stands to-day in the old cemetery of Brookline. His brother Fenn soon entered the army, and was for several years one of the Committee of the Pay Table in Hartford. He died just after the close of the war, and a monument in Saratoga marks his resting-place.

From this point our sources of information about Farmington men in the war are sadly lessened. The orderly-book of Roger Hooker closes with his promotion to be Second Lieutenant under Ebenezer Sumner, Captain of the 5th Company in the 22d Regiment, which office he was holding as early as December 11th. On the 2d of February, 1776, begins the short diary of Colonel Fisher Gay. He says:

“Set off for headquarters to join the army under command of General Washington before Boston, and arrived at Roxbury the 6th of said month. Stationed at Roxbury with the regiment I belonged to, and quartered at Mr. Wyman's with Col. Wolcott and Mr. Perry. Was sent for by General Washington to wait on his Excellency the 13th of said month, and was ordered by the General to go to Connecticut to purchase all the gunpowder I could. Went to Providence, and from thence to Gov. Trumbull, where I obtained 2 tons of the Governor, and then to New London to Mr. T[homas] Mumford, and obtained of him an order on Messrs. Clark & Nightingill, merchants in Providence, and returned to camp the 19th, and made report to the General to his great satisfaction.”

On Sunday, March 17th, he writes:

“Col. Wolcott on the hill. An alarm in the morning. I ordered the regiment to meet before the Colonel's door after prayers. I marched them off with Major Chester. Near the alarm post found, instead of going to action, the enemy had abandoned Boston. 500 troops immediately ordered to march into and take possession of the fortifications in Boston. Col. Larned, myself, Majors Sproat and Chester, with a number of other officers

and troops, marched in and took possession, and tarried there till the 19th at night, then returned to camp at Roxbury. Never people more glad at the departure of an enemy and to see friends."

Deacon Samuel Richards also tells of the entry into Boston in his "Personal Narrative." He says:

"I had the gratification of being selected to carry the American flag at the head of the column which entered from the Roxbury side. When arrived in the town numerous incidents crowded upon our view. I can particularize but few of them. The burst of joy shown in the countenances of our friends so long shut up and domineered over by an insulting enemy; the meeting and mutual salutations of parents and children, and other members of families, having been separated by the sudden shutting up of the town after the battle of Lexington; the general dilapidation of the houses, several churches emptied of all the inside work and turned into riding-schools for the cavalry; all the places which had been previously used for public resort torn to pieces. As I was the bearer of the flag, I attracted some attention and was constantly pressed with invitations to 'call in and take a glass of wine with me.'"

On the day before the evacuation of Boston Governor Trumbull closes a letter with the exclamation:

"Hitherto the Lord hath helped us. Although they came against us with a great multitude and are using great artifice, yet let our eyes be on the Lord of Hosts and our trust in Him."

And then adds:

"P. S. This moment received a letter from headquarters requesting me to throw two thousand men into New York from the frontiers of Connecticut to maintain the place until the General can arrive with the army under his command."

In response thereto the Farmington soldiers marched by way of Providence to New London, where they took ship, and, after running upon a rock in Hell Gate, finally reached New York in safety. Here, on the 22d of August, shortly before the Americans were driven from the city,

died Colonel Fisher Gay. A not very well authenticated tradition affirms that he was buried in Trinity Church-yard.

With New York in possession of the enemy, the towns on the coast were exposed to raid by the British and Tories. This, with the scarcity of provisions in New Haven, caused the corporation of Yale College to send the freshman class to Farmington, the sophomore and junior classes to Glastonbury, and the seniors to Wethersfield, to meet at these respective places on the 27th of May, 1777. Again they advertise that the sophomore class is ordered to meet at Farmington October 22, 1777:

“Where provision is made for their residence. We could wish to have found suitable accommodations for the senior class, and have taken great pains to effect it, but hitherto without success.”

Here came their tutor, the Rev. John Lewis, and here in the old cemetery you will find a stone recording the birth and death in this village of his son, John Livy.

After the surrender of Burgoyne, General Gates ordered the captured artillery sent to Connecticut for safety, and a memorial to the General Assembly states that Colonel Ichabod Norton, grandfather of the late John T. Norton, Esq., was ordered

“To take the command of a company and proceed to Albany for the purpose of guarding the cannon taken from Gen. Burgoyne the last campaign, ordered to be removed to said Farmington.”

After the expedition was well under way the snow disappeared, and the men were a fortnight dragging the heavy pieces through the mud. They were finally stored in the orchard of John Mix, where they remained a considerable time.

During the remainder of the war the Farmington soldiers were located almost exclusively in the Highlands

above New York. Of the first occupancy of West Point, Deacon Richards says :

“ I being at the time senior officer of the regiment present, of course led on the regiment, crossing the river on the ice. . . . Coming on to the small plain surrounded by the mountains, we found it covered with a growth of yellow pines ten or fifteen feet high; no house or improvement on it; the snow waist high. We fell to lopping down the tops of the shrub pines and treading down the snow, spread our blankets, and lodged in that condition the first and second nights.”

Concerning this same affair Deacon Elijah Porter says in his journal:

“ When Gen. Putnam was ready to go over on the ice he called me to come to him. He then loaded me with tools for building huts, and took a heavy load himself, and bade me follow him. When we got about half a mile on the ice, he went on some shelly ice, began to slip about, and down he went with his load of tools and made the ice crack so that I thought he would go down, but the ice held him up, and I sprang round and picked up his tools and loaded him up again. We went on and arrived safe on the point.”

Deacon Porter soon returned home and his journal closes, but Deacon Richards remained at West Point and was an eye-witness of the execution of Andre. To Timothy Hosmer, formerly the village doctor of Farmington, and now army surgeon, was assigned the duty of laying his finger on Andre's pulse and reporting him dead.

Deacon Richards was at West Point during the building of the fortifications the subsequent spring under the direction of Kosciusko. He says :

“ I was quartered a considerable time with him in the same log hut, and soon discovered in him an elevation of mind which gave fair promise of those high achievements to which he attained. His manners were soft and conciliating and at the same time ele-

vated. I used to take much pleasure in accompanying him about with his theodolite, measuring the heights of the surrounding mountains. He was very ready in mathematics. Our family now consisted of Brigadier-General Parsons, Doctor, afterwards President Dwight, Kosciusko, and myself, with the domestics. . . . When the weather had become mild and pleasant in April, I went one day with Dr. Dwight down to view the ruins of Fort Montgomery, distant about eight or ten miles. There was a pond just north of the fort, where we found the British had thrown in the bodies of their own and our men who fell in the assault of the fort."

He closes a very gruesome account of the spectacle with the exclamation :

"Had the fort held out a little longer, I very probably might have lain among them."

I shall close this rambling paper with a notice of a proposed invasion of this quiet village, a bill for which actually passed the Lower House of the General Assembly near the close of the war in 1781 :

"Resolved by this Assembly that considering the peculiar difficulty that many of the members of this Assembly meet with in procuring subsistence for themselves and forage for their horses, it is expedient this Assembly be adjourned to the town of Farmington to transact and complete the business of the present session, as soon as proper accommodations can be made and that the selectmen of said town be desired to make the necessary preparation for the reception of the Assembly as soon as possible.

"Passed in the Lower House,

"Test, JOHN TREADWELL, Clerk, P. T."

The reply to this request by the Selectmen of Farmington was as follows :

"To the Honorable Lower House of Assembly now sitting in Hartford. Being desired by your Honors to make inquiry whether the General Assembly may be accommodated in their present sessions in this town, we have to observe that from the knowledge we have of the circumstances of the inhabitants, we are of the

opinion that should the Honorable Assembly signify their determination to adjourn to this place, the members might be conveniently, though perhaps not elegantly subsisted, and their horses well provided. The greatest difficulty will be to provide a house in which it would be convenient to transact business. The Meeting House, though elegant and well finished, would be inconvenient for want of a fire at this inclement season. The dwelling house of Mr. Asahel Wadsworth, situate in the center of the town, may be obtained for the purpose, and is as convenient as any in the town. It is 42 feet in length and about 22 in breadth. The rooms on the lower floor finished, and one of them may well accommodate the Honorable Upper House. There are two stacks of chimnies, one at each end. The chambers are unfurnished, the floor laid but not divided into several apartments. One fire place is finished, and the room, if proper seats were made, which might soon be done, would be large enough for the Lower House. The house is covered with jointed boards and clapboards upon them, but neither ceiled nor plastered. This is an exact description of Mr. Wadsworth's house, and if the Honorable Assembly shall judge it will answer the purpose, upon suitable notice might be accommodated and other preparation made in a short time.

“We are, with sentiments of the highest esteem and regard,

“Your Honors' most obedient and most humble servants.

“FARMINGTON, February 26, 1781.

JAMES JUDD, } Selectmen
ISAAC BIDWELL, } of Farmington.

A letter from Elijah Hubbard offering the Assembly accommodations at Middletown equally magnificent was also sent.

Time fails to speak of the after-life of these worthy men, of William Judd, famous in the political history of the State; of John Treadwell, last of the Puritan Governors of Connecticut; of Samuel Richards, first post-master of Farmington; of Roger Hooker, sitting of a summer evening under his noble elm tree and delighting the assembled youth of the village with tales of a seafaring youth, of shipwreck, and of his long service in the

Continental army; of Timothy Hosmer, village doctor, army surgeon, judge of Ontario county, New York, and pioneer settler of that western wilderness; of Noadiah Hooker, honored with many public trusts, and finally, as a white-haired old man, standing on the hillside above Whitehall and dropping a not unmanly tear over the graves of a hundred of his soldiers buried by him during the terrible days of the pestilence at Skenesborough; of John Mix, for twenty-six years the representative of this town to the General Assembly of the State, and of Timothy Pitkin, welcoming his children home from their victorious struggle, their beloved pastor and faithful friend. There were other, many other, worthy men of whom we would know more, who deserved well of their country. If this paper shall prompt any one to preserve the scanty memorials of them which still exist, my labor this evening will not have been in vain.

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